

**Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas
Board Meeting Minutes
415 S. First Street, Suite 110B, Lufkin, TX 75901
November 14, 2023**

I. CHAIR KELLI MARSHALL CALLED THE BOARD MEETING TO ORDER AT 2:36 P.M.

MS. MARSHALL ANNOUNCED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDANCE FROM THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (WD LETTER 28-19) DATED NOVEMBER 19, 2019, REGARDING THE TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 551 ALLOWING THE USE OF VIDEO-CONFERENCING AS A METHOD FOR CONDUCTING BOARD MEETINGS, THE BOARD IS PROVIDING FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN ITS BOARD MEETING AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ABOVE AND VIA VIRTUAL MEETING WEB LINK. SHE ALSO SAID THE MEETING IS BEING RECORDED AND THE OPEN SESSION PORTION OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC UPON REQUEST. THE BOARD SERVES TWELVE (12) COUNTIES AND LISTED THE HOST LOCATION; AND PRESIDING OFFICER, KELLI MARSHALL, WAS PHYSICALLY PRESENT.

AFTER THE ROLL CALL, MS. MARSHALL CONFIRMED THAT A QUORUM WAS PRESENT:

Members Present: Joe Clyde Adams, Lisa Balty, Rebekah Burkhalter, TJ Colwell, Tyane Dietz, Tim Ditoro, Robert Fitzpatrick, James Gentry, Phyllis Grandgeorge, Ethan Herr, Eddie Hopkins, Garvey Jackson, Kotosha Jeffery, Matthew Lowery, Kelli Marshall, Quincy Martindale, Ellen Mills

Members Absent: Wayne Haglund, Staci Hodges, Anita Humphreys, Malcolm Ifoezeh, Gene Lee, Benjamin Mott, Marisa Phillips, Randy Roberts, Jessica Rogers, Rich Scott, John Allen Slocomb, John White

Board Staff Present: Mark Durand, Dara Harmon, Debb Homman, Sarah Milligan, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, Karen Stubblefield

Visitors: Kevin Bradford, LaTreaser Cartwright, Rhonda Cartwright, Paul Dunn, Michelle Kennedy, Keith McLeod

KELLI MARSHALL REMINDED THE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION.

Ms. Marshall asked that all members sign a conflict of interest declaration regardless of whether they have a conflict and return the form to Board staff.

WELCOME OF GUESTS:

None

II. Public Comments

None

III. Discussion/Action: Approval of Minutes – September 19, 2023

Motion: Robert Fitzpatrick made the motion to approve the minutes as presented.
Second: Eddie Hopkins
In Favor: All
Oppose: None
Abstain: None
Motion: Passes

IV. Board Members Comments on Activity in their Respective Areas

Kelli Marshall mentioned that Southwest Airlines has signed an offtake agreement to buy sustainable aviation fuel from a new biorefinery being built by USA BioEnergy, LLC in Newton County. On the downside, closing of an Orange County plant could effect Jasper and Newton counties. Mr. Durand mentioned the Hiring Red, White & You Job Fair in Angelina and Polk counties.

V. Executive Director's Report

A. Contracts/Agreements

Mr. Durand reported on the Dynamic Workforce Solutions contract amendment in which \$66,000 in funding was transferred from In-School Youth to Out-of-School Youth. Renovations of the Angelina County Workforce Center have been completed, including replacement of cubicles, replacing of carpet, and updating breakroom for staff. This renovation enabled Accounts Payable staff with child care contractor to be in the same location as the rest of the child care contractor staff.

B. Performance

Child Care:

The year-to-date (YTD) average children served per day is currently 2,379 (102.85%). The September performance report reflected an average 2,354 per day with 543 on the wait list. There are currently 87 Child Care provider agreements and 48 Texas Rising Star (TRS) Providers serving 1,321 CCS children.

Workforce:

As of November 2023, the most recent Monthly Performance Report (MPR) available reflects numbers through July 2023. End of year (EOY) WIOA Training Enrollments were 115; 79 completed and 25 currently enrolled. 35,552 total customers received services at the workforce centers; this includes 3,793 in-person, and 5,489 virtual. 11,029 customers utilized the resource room and 2,578 requested and received help in finding a job or referral.

C. Contacts and Coordination Efforts

Mr. Durand stated that through the Rural Partners Initiative the Temple Foundation is funding consultants to enhance the Diboll and Pineland communities. Mr. Durand announced that a valuable asset to the Board, Ms. Aubrey Jones, Student HireAbility Navigator, has left the Board to pursue other endeavors. Mr. Durand noted several other things going on in the Economic Development Centers (EDC) around our region.

D. Rules and Legislation Update

Mr. Durand mentioned that there were 13 of 14 Propositions passed and of note:

- Proposition 2 allows cities and counties to exempt child care centers from paying taxes on all or part of their appraised value.
- Proposition 8 created a fund to expand high-speed broadband in rural Texas.
- Governor Abbott appointed Joe Esparza to fill the position of Commissioner Representing Employers with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

Tyane Dietz mentioned her frustration with getting courses approved with TEA for preparing students for industry, like Lockheed Martin that have a demand for those industry jobs.

E. Funding

No additional funding this period.

F. Other Activity and Administrative Matters not requiring action by the Board

Mr. Durand reported the September 2023 unemployment rate of 4.9% decreased from the month prior, and the Labor Force increased by 2,821. Rapid Response was scheduled for International Paper and Cygnus Home Services to outreach those employees affected. Also to Sound Resource Solutions that had an explosion/fire and the employer was confident that he could retain his current employees.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Operations Committee

1. Committee Activity

Information and Briefing Items

a. WIOA Data Validation

Mr. Durand stated that the TWC recently completed data validation testing for Fiscal Year 2022 of WIOA for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Areas of concern were: In Trade – 1 of 2 records unmet and Service Tracking 2 of 2 records unmet; in Adults – 1 of 3 records unmet; in Youth – 1 or 1 records unmet. Sarah mentioned that both the Board and Workforce Contractor continually monitor data validation by comparing the participants' records to source documentation to ensure compliance with federal requirements. There was such a small sample of records tested. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the samples tested were so small and that was not helpful to any results. Ms. Marshall asked if there were any repercussions to the findings and Mr. Durand assured that it did not affect our eligibility. The Board is looking to see if there is a better system for learning and training. The hope is that the new program TWIST implements will assist with the information verification.

b. Child Care Improper Payment Testing Review

The TWC completed data validation testing for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). This process verifies data and ensures compliance with federal requirements for the Fiscal Year 2023. The testing resulted in no errors or concerns with improper payments.

B. Business Services Committee

1. Committee Activity

Information and Briefing Items

a. Upskill Texas Grant Award Recipient

Ms. Dietz summarized that it had been announced in October that TWC selected Burke Center as an awardee for an Upskill Texas grant. The grant was for \$179,504 for 150 trainees. The Burke Center implemented a new Electronic Health Record (EHR) in April of 2021. New and existing employees will be trained to use the EHR. Burke was the first center in the country to utilize the NetSmart EHR. The Upskill grant will be utilized to develop specialized training to train the trainers.

b. Skills Development Grant Consortium

Ms. Dietz continued that it had been announced that TWC selected Angelina College as an awardee for a Skills Development Fund (SDF) grant in partnership with Corrigan OSB, Endura Products and Georgia-Pacific. The award was in the amount of \$84,428 to upgrade 74 jobs. The training is customized ranging from AC/DC Drives, Basic Hydraulics, Blueprint Reading, Maintenance Welding and Soft/Critical skills.

c. Rapid Response Services

Ms. Dietz explained that in the events reported from 2020 to 2023 some of the numbers don't tell the whole story. That although there were 813 affected workers in 2023 (through September), over 540 of them were from a manufacturing close, not because of economic impact. Mr. Durand added that the prison service number was high because of a change in leadership in Diboll, but that those interested could turn in their resume to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDJC).

d. Teacher Externship RFA 32024-00039

The Board successfully submitted its application to provide fifteen (15) teachers with an externship that gives them an opportunity to engage in industry-related activities and learn how classroom content is applied in the real world. The grant request is \$55,683 and the

teachers would receive a \$1,000 stipend. Effective this year, TWC increased the minimum number of days the teacher spends at the worksite from 3 to 5 days, extending the employees resources and possibly making recruitment of employers and teachers more challenging. Secondly, the employer is now responsible for collaborating with the school district to provide a tour of the worksite and/or offer classroom presentations during the Fall semester.

C. Executive/Finance Committee

1. Committee Activity

Information and Briefing Items

a. SNAP Embargo Monitoring Report

TWC conducted a review of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) during their March 2023 annual monitoring. The period was December 2021 through December of 2022 and included tests of transactions and to ensure fiscal and program controls are effectively managed. No action is required.

b. Texas Workforce Commission FY'22 Audit Acceptance Letter

Mr. Durand commented Alexander, Langford and Heirs worked with Maribel and Misty to review the audit report ending September 2022. The review noted no issues, and no action was required.

c. Tri-Agency Regional Convener Grant Report

Board staff, Jeff Eichman and Josh Fleming, created a cross-sector pathways leadership team called SPEAR (Student Pathways for Economic Advancement in the Region). There will be a \$1,000 stipend for the school's IT or AV department for the team that creates a new logo for SPEAR. Mr. Durand added that Jeff and Josh are doing a great job and are currently working on an Asset Map and Gap Analysis Report which will be presented at the next meeting.

2. Discussion/Possible Action

a. Action Item 23-22 Child Care Quality Implementation and Expenditure Plan

Ms. Marshall mentioned that this funding is an estimate, and that if funds are needed in different areas, funds could be approved to be used differently. Currently, Debb Homman summarized the monies recommended used to help Texas Rising Star (TRS) Centers become a qualified center or to raise their TRS level.

Training and Professional Development – this includes professional development, Annual TRS Banquet, statewide conferences, and CDA classes; Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) – this includes a family engagement event, incentives, signage, classroom educational materials and curriculum training; Infant and Toddler Quality Initiatives – which includes classroom educational material required by TRS; Supporting Health and Safety – includes CPR classes, AEDs and age-appropriate nap cots/cribs; Evaluating Quality – includes a wearable device for language assessment; and Shared Services – including desk scanners to cut down on fraud.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for acceptance of the Child Care Quality Implementation and Expenditure Plan as presented.

Second: Garvey Jackson

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

b. Action Item 23-23 Language Access Plan

Ms. Marshall stated that to ensure equal and meaningful access to individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), the Board has developed a Language Access Plan. The Board has procured TranslateLive ILA Pro tablets. These tablets allow for real-time, natural back-and-forth communication - basically an interpreter service. Two were purchased and we are going

to try it in our Angelina and Shelby County Centers. If this is successful, we can purchase additional units.

Motion: The Executive/Finance Committee recommended for acceptance of the Language Access Plan as presented.

Second: Tyane Dietz

In Favor: All

Oppose: None

Abstain: None

Motion: Passes

c. Open Session Action, if any, as a result of Closed Session

None

3. Discussion and Acceptance of Financial Reports

a. Financial Reports for August & September 2023

- **Statement of Financial Position**
- **Budget vs. Actual**
- **Grant Report**

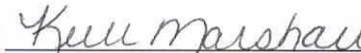
Finance Director, Maribel Soto-Mendoza, provided financial updates for August and September 2023. Mr. Durand reviewed the Contracts Outstanding report, outlining grants and funding that are nearing an end and/or renewal.

VII. Acceptance of Nominating Committee?

VIII. Adjourn

Kelli Marshall adjourned the Board Meeting at 3:53 p.m.

Duly passed and approved on this 23 day of Jan 2024


Kelli Marshall, Chair

Attest


Dara Harmon, Exec. Administrative Assistant